



Luckiamute Watershed Council

www.luckiamutelwc.org

LWC Mission:

Working together to help people help their watersheds.

What we are:

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is a volunteer, nongovernmental, advisory group composed of stakeholders living or working in the Luckiamute and Ash Creek watersheds.

Council meetings:

Held the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m., Visit our website at:

www.luckiamutelwc.org for location and details.

Meetings are open to the public. Please join us!



Events:

Join us for a free knotweed workshop on August 23! Topics include knotweed ID, impacts and best treatment practices to rid your property of this destructive non-native. For more details, see page 3.

From Headwaters to Confluence: Journey of a River



Bald Mountain, the birthplace of the Luckiamute River, is shrouded by cloud cover.

Last month, a group of 50 intrepid explorers joined the Greenbelt Land Trust (GLT) and the Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC) for an all-day tour of the Luckiamute River. From its headwaters at the top of Bald Mountain, to its confluence with the Willamette River, tour participants got a view of the many faces of their beloved waterway.

Our journey began at Sarah Helmick State Park, Oregon's first state park, where we caught a glimpse of the Luckiamute serenely flowing through quiet stands of cottonwood, Oregon ash and bigleaf maples. Jim Scott, our local bird expert, alerted us to the song of a black-headed grosbeak, whose cheerful caroling notes bring to mind a slightly tipsy robin welcoming a beautiful morning.

After a welcome from GLT's Jessica McDonald, a round of introductions revealed that our group came from all over the watershed and beyond. From a vanload of WOU earth science students to several long-time residents of the watershed, this diverse group was united by their connection to the river. And each of them had their own reasons for attending this excursion. For some, it was a chance to explore new fishing spots or to see their beloved river from a broader perspective. For some, it was all about the cool rocks.

You see, the creation of the Luckiamute basin is a pretty awesome moment in the geological timeline of the Willamette Valley. An in-depth lesson about the history of the area by WOU geologist Steve Taylor revealed to us the intricacies of what lies beneath the surface of the surrounding landscape. Turns out that underneath the trees, soil and rocks sits two huge tectonic plates, one of which is slowly being pushed—or *subducted*—under the other. This subduction is what causes a relatively high frequency of large magnitude earthquakes and volcanic activity in the area, though thankfully in geologic terms, frequent means on the order of 300 to 500 years between eruptions. Additionally, the Luckiamute basin sits at the confluence of four different bedrock formations, which has allowed for fascinating comparative studies between different types of... well... cool rocks.

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For others, the awe-inspiring moments came from the river itself. Since the vast majority of the Luckiamute watershed (87%) is made up of remote forestland and privately owned farms, the journey to each of the four destinations along the river was an adventure in and of itself. A bumpy van ride into privately owned forest ride brought us to our very first stop -- an amazing view of Bald Mountain, the birthplace of the Luckiamute River, and the entire northern watershed boundary. From this vantage point, it was easy to visualize the beginning of the Luckiamute River from the point of view of a single raindrop as it falls on the eastern slopes of the Coast Range.

Still on Hancock Timber Resource Group property, we joined back up with the river a few miles downstream, at the LWC's Side Channel Reconnection project site. Here an old river meander that had been separated from the main channel had been rejoined with the river, allowing coho salmon and steelhead to once again navigate upstream to better breeding grounds. Stepping carefully over newly planted multi-flora rose and snowberry plants, the group marveled at the scope of this project and the ability of our species to literally change the course of a river – for both good and bad.



The Luckiamute River now meanders naturally at the LWC Side Channel Reconnection Project site.

Driving out of Hancock land, we were suddenly thrust into flat expanses of rich agricultural land. During a lunch break at Fort Hoskins Historical Park it was easy to see why this spot was chosen by the Luckiamute band of Kalipuya Indians, and later the US Army, as an excellent spot to keep an eye out for trouble. At Fort Hoskins, the Luckiamute River bends itself into a deep hairpin curve as it navigates around a low ridge — enabling occupants to keep tabs on any enemies that might be moving below.

Our post-lunch excursion took us to the property of Dr. Cliff and Gay Hall, who together with the GLT, LWC and other

About the LWC

The Luckiamute Watershed Council is comprised of volunteer watershed residents who care about the health of the watershed. Current members represent interests ranging from farming and forestry to education and water resources.

The Council is recruiting new board members and seeks individuals who work, live, or play in the watershed—you are a watershed stakeholder.

We also welcome donations to support the work of the council, an Oregon non-profit organization. Please send checks to: [226 S. Main St. Suite L, Independence, OR 97351](#)

Thank you!

Upcoming Council Meetings

Join us for Council Monthly Meetings, held the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Our meetings are always open to the public and discussion topics include local watershed issues and actions. For details, please visit our web site at www.luckiamutelwc.org.

August 14 2014: Volunteer Hall, Monmouth.

September 11, 2014: Location TBD, Falls City.

October 9, 2014: Volunteer Hall, Monmouth.

November 13, 2014: Volunteer Hall, Monmouth.

From Headwaters to Confluence, continued

entities, have helped transform the degraded stream-bank of Maxfield Creek – an important tributary of the Luckiamute River – to a thriving riparian woodland. Students from neighboring Kings Valley Charter School have also been recruited as partners in the restoration efforts on the Hall’s property. Just a few years after removing invasives and replanting with native vegetation, the river has etched a new route, creating meanders that slow the water’s flow and support micro-habitats that favor native plant and animal communities. Speaking to us from the shade of a towering cottonwood, the pride in Dr. Hall’s voice was apparent as he spoke of the role he and his wife have played in bringing this little corner of the watershed back to health.



The Luckiamute River near its confluence with the Willamette, at Luckiamute State Natural Area.

Our final stop was at the home stretch of the Luckiamute River before its flow merges with that of the mighty Willamette: Luckiamute State Natural Area. Park Ranger Steve DeGoey introduced us to the history of this small but spectacular state park, pointing out that this is the home of the largest remnant of gallery forest left in the Willamette Valley. As we hiked the mile-long North tract loop, Kristen Larson discussed the important restoration work that is being completed here by the LWC in partnership with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Meyer Memorial Trust.

As we stood on the small rise overlooking the lazy final stretch of the Luckiamute River, we marveled at the transformation of the river at different points along its length. Undoubtedly, we had each experienced our own personal transformations as we witnessed the dynamic relationship of the river to the surrounding landscape. Our long, meandering journey alongside the Luckiamute river had concluded, but the seeds of this experience remained – inspiring us all to do what we can to protect the well-being of the river that is such an instrumental part our own well-being and that of our communities.

Polk Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting

Polk SWCD’s annual meeting will take place on **August 21 at 5:30 pm**. The annual meeting gives the Polk SWCD an opportunity to share its many accomplishments over the past year and thank the many volunteers for their hard work and numerous hours while promoting conservation and shopping local. Please join this year’s event!

The meeting will be located at **Seabreeze Farms**: 7145 Perrydale Rd, Amity

Please RSVP by August 1st at www.polkswcd.org



- Date:** Saturday, August 23, 2014
- Time:** 10am to about 2pm
- Location:** Monmouth Public Library
168 Ecols Street S.
- Details:** Morning coffee and snacks provided.
Bring a bag lunch and be prepared for

Please RSVP by August 15, 2014 by contacting 503-837-0237 or outreach@luckiamutelwc.org

The Luckiamute Watershed Council, in partnership with OSU Extension, is presenting a free workshop focused on the identification and control of knotweed, a highly destructive non-native plant. Topics will include:

- Plant identification
- Negative impacts of knotweed
- Best treatment practices to control knotweed (facilitated by a professional reforestation contractor)

Free Community Knotweed Workshop



Coordinator's Corner: Paddling the Luckiamute

While the vast majority of the LWC's efforts and funding is dedicated to on-the-ground activity out there in the watershed, most of my time is spent in the office. I work on grant applications, budgets, reports, communications with the board, landowners and partners, and overall organizational "stuff" (e.g. phone bills and payroll). I always enjoy the opportunity to get out in the field to existing or potential project sites. Early this July, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to join our co-project manager, Jean-Paul Zagarola, for a paddle on the Luckiamute River as part of our annual knotweed survey. Being on the water always provides a different perspective of a river. On the Luckiamute, this experience offers a mix of frustration and optimism. Knotweed patches on the banks and floating canes abound, particularly in the upper reaches. It's frustrating to see its pervasiveness along some stretches of the river and to see the difference in areas where we have permission to treat and areas where we are not yet working. However, it's uplifting to see vast reductions in patch size and extent in areas we've been treating for repeated years, to see how little knotweed there is in the lower part of the river, and to see the condition of the riparian vegetation in many areas. Willows and dogwood overhang, scratching at our arms as we paddle past. Tight meanders catch logs and other debris and add complexity to the river. Log jams span the river and create



Paddling the middle Luckiamute River, approaching another log jam to navigate around.

structure, change water velocities, catch sediment, and provide habitat. The same log jams certainly present challenges to the paddler (paddlers beware!) but remind me that while there are still many opportunities to improve the condition of the river and the watershed, we are already enjoying the benefits of our collective stewardship of our waterway.



Let's Pull Together!

Join us on September 6, from 9am to 12pm for a community weed pull and help us eradicate English ivy from the banks of Ash Creek. Meet us at the boat ramp for this fun and worthwhile effort! Gloves, tools and snacks will be provided.



*Helping people help
their watershed*

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Luckiamute Watershed Council

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